

The Small Homes Council at the University of Illinois

By Professor William H. Scheick, Coordinator

The new Small Homes Council at the University of Illinois is completing its first nine months of activity and may be said to be emerging from the "trial" stage. It is entirely different from a college or department, since its place within the University's structure is "horizontal," cutting across departmental lines to coordinate any work which pertains to teaching or research in the construction, ownership and maintenance of the home.

The Council's purposes may be grouped into three main divisions.

1. The publication and distribution of University bulletins to give the general public authentic information on a wide variety of subjects related to home building. These publications are to be in a non-technical style, in brief and concise form.
2. Development of an integrated research program on home building which will employ the resources of as many departments of the University as possible. The facilities developed by the research program are to be used to the benefit of teaching in departments having suitable curricula.
3. Continual promotion of cooperation between the University and the professions, businesses and trades of the building industry, particularly within Illinois but not limited to the state.

The Small Homes Council has an opportunity to become an agency of real service in a field which has suffered from a lack of unity and at a time when great developments seem to be imminent. It is not intended that the Council shall ever offer services which could replace those of any profession such as architecture.

First steps were taken toward establishing the Small Homes Council in April, 1944 when President A. C. Willard asked Dean M. L. Enger of the College of Engineering to form a committee to determine whether the University should and could undertake a program which might be of value to the state in the field of "low cost housing."

This general committee was comprised of representatives of several departments including architecture, agricultural engineering, home economics, mechanical, civil, electrical, and sanitary engineering. In June an advisory committee was formed with Rexford Newcomb, Dean of the College of Fine and Applied Arts, who is well known to architects in Illinois, as its chairman. This committee appointed Professor William H. Scheick of Architecture to coordinate the work of the Council and to head a working staff. The name "Small Homes Council" was adopted for the new organization.

The Advisory Committee directed its attention at first entirely to the development of a sound, long-range program which could be put into effect step by step. All aspects of the housing problems of the future seemed to fully justify active and vigorous participation in their study and solution by the University. It was decided to focus the work of the Council particularly upon the individual small home, both urban and rural, without involving it in the subject of large-scale urban housing, slum clearance and the like.

The committee believed that small homes have had neither the benefit of adequate research nor of any concerted efforts to solve the many problems connected with them. The volume

of home building which will be required in the coming years makes the subject of vital importance everywhere. The general public finds itself facing this period of building activity with a great deal of misinformation and a general lack of trustworthy information on standard fundamentals as well as on new developments.

The essential purposes of a University are education and research. A State University is expected to extend its sphere of education beyond its own campus in the form of information to citizens of the state. This relation between the functions of the University and the nature of home building problems determined the policies laid down for the Small Homes Council by its Advisory Committee. These policies were developed into a proposed program which was established in August, 1944, and has served to guide subsequent work by the Council. This program is available in printed form upon request. Its major points have been mentioned previously, namely: publications, research and education and cooperation with industry.

In September, 1944, the Board of Trustees officially established the Small Homes Council as a part of the University and approved its program. Work was begun at once upon activities which seemed to be fundamental in the long range plan.

First tangible evidence of the Council's work is now available in several numbers of its "Circular Series" of University bulletins. These publications are samples of the original ideas for a program for public information. The first two, *Storm Windows* and *Selecting the Homesite*, were issued in January to a mailing list of several hundred people who had heard of the Small Homes Council and inquired about it.

The response to the circulars was quick and gratifying. The study and care which had gone into their format and material were rewarded by many complimentary letters. As additional issues appeared there was a great increase in requests to be on the mailing list. Permission was granted to trade and professional magazines to reprint the circulars in part or in their entirety. There is a growing demand from business concerns for quantity orders of the bulletins for private distribution.

At the time of this writing there are six issues in print which include, in addition to the two mentioned above, *Solar Orientation*, *Heating the Home*, *Financing the Home* and *Selecting a Liveable Neighborhood*. Several others are being prepared among them, *Selecting the Plan*, *Comparative Cost of Fuels*, *Planning the Kitchen and Insulation*. These are indicative of the scope of the circular series which will be continually enlarged and broadened. The council plans to issue one of these bulletins every month.

The series is indexed for a continually expanding file, each issue bearing a serial number B2.1, G3.2, etc. For example, the "A" series pertains to financial subjects, "B" to land use, "C" to design, "G" to mechanical equipment. General fundamental subjects are being treated in early issues; new materials, methods or research will be reported in later issues whenever adequate information warrants publication.

It must be emphasized here that the material published in these circulars represents broader sources than the University itself. Every subject is of interest to some part of the

building industry. The Council has had fine cooperation from several professional and business organizations in preparing those circulars which have been published to date. These organizations have given help by supplying additional information or by editing material prior to publication. The circulars are proving to be an excellent medium for promoting the desired collaboration between the University and the practical world of building.

The distribution of the circulars is made first to a "basic mailing list" of individuals or business firms who ask to receive the publications of the Council. Copies of each issue are mailed free of charge to each name on the list. At the present time these mailings are not restricted to Illinois and are going to all parts of the country. A second important part of the circulation is in unsolicited sales of "quantity orders" as mentioned before.

Architects are indeed welcome to the mailing list, and it is hoped that the whole membership of the profession in Illinois will avail itself not only of the opportunity to receive the circulars, but of their right to make suggestions and criticisms.

During the year several committees of the Council have given much thought and study to the research program. Architects will readily understand that there are innumerable ways of conducting research on home building.

The University now has in operation two research homes, the War Air Research Residence, and the I. B. R. Research Residence which have gained national recognition for the importance of their findings in heating, ventilating and insulation. These homes are not on the campus itself and are owned by the Scientific Associations for which the research is conducted.

There are many other problems in home building, such as financing, land use, design, operation, and maintenance, which offer wonderful possibilities for study. Practically all research now being done is of a piece meal nature widely scattered among the laboratories of Universities and manufacturers. Most of it pertains to problems related to building materials or mechanical equipment.

The Small Homes Council believes that there is an urgent need for an adequate integrated home research center which would have, not only research homes but a laboratory for full scale study of construction methods and room arrangements.

The year's work has resulted in plans for a proposed Home Research Center at the University of Illinois which would accomplish the desired objectives. These plans are still being discussed by University authorities.

Another job for the Small Homes Council developed during its first year. The idea of Home Planners' Institutes has been spreading across the country to many communities. The institutes are essentially a series of lectures which may be conducted in any town or city for the benefit of people who expect to build homes in the near future. There are talks on *Financing the Home, Selecting the Homesite, Designing the Home, Construction and Materials, Mechanical Equipment* and several other subjects which the home builder needs to know about. Chambers of Commerce in nearly twenty Illinois cities have been making plans to conduct Home Planners Institutes during the coming year. They have looked to the Small Homes Council for advice in shaping their organizations and for help in conducting the programs. The Council has enlisted the aid of more than twenty State Associations to form a speakers' bureau which will supply out-of-town speakers for the programs in various communities. In addition to the main speakers there is a discussion panel for each lecture which may be made up of professional or business men whose interests are particularly connected with the lecture of the evening.

There are many places in these programs where architects are in demand either as speakers or members of the discussion panels. It is quite probable that Illinois architects will find a Home Planners Institute in progress in their own communities next fall. It is a fine opportunity for them to take part in a community endeavor which will benefit everyone connected with home building.

This article has set forth the brief history of the new Small Homes Council as well as its accomplishments during the past few months. It has now reached a point where its possibilities are clearly defined and its opportunities for service are imminent. Those who have been responsible for the formation of its program are particularly anxious that it should be as practical and realistic as the subject of home building itself. The Small Homes Council looks to the architects of Illinois for their help and advice in accomplishing its purposes.

An organization named American Association of Women Architects and Engineers has been organized with three chapters in the U.S., one of which is in the University of Illinois, another in the University of Texas and the third in the University of Oklahoma. In the Illinois chapter are fourteen coed engineers and twenty-five coed architects. Jean Linden of Ferndale, Michigan was elected president of the Illinois chapter.

Ralph Waldo Emerson said in 1837, "Our day of dependence, our long apprenticeship to the learning of other lands, draws to a close. We have listened too long to the courtly muses of Europe. . . . We will walk on our own feet; we will work with our hands; we will speak our own minds. . . . Edward Everett Hale noted in his diary that the speech was "not very good and very transcendental." James Russell Lowell said the speech was our Yankee version of a lecture by Abiard.

Sixty years later the phrase, "inventive and indigenous American architecture" was coined. Louis Sullivan and Frank Lloyd Wright assumed they had solved their problems to fit that phrase.

For Postwar Public Works

Edward P. Palmer, chairman of the Construction and Civic Development Department Committee of the Chamber of Commerce of the United States, presented to the House Subcommittee of Public Works and Construction, seven recommendations on postwar public works construction. These were:

1. Sponsorship of various classes of public works by federal, state and local governments should be clarified.
2. The federal tax structure should be revised so as not to hamper the ability of state and local governments to achieve financial independence.
3. Congressional scrutiny of federal public works projects should be broadened to include careful consideration of the over-all budgetary picture.
4. Construction through competitive contracts should be more widely used to assure economy and clarify costs, in order to assure better consideration of needs, costs, etc.
5. State and local governments should cooperate with the federal government in the advance planning of public works in order to be ready for the transition period when materials will be available and additional employment essential.
6. The federal government should collect and make available continuously current statistics on both public and private construction volume and employment as a practical first step towards stabilizing construction activity.
7. Private construction should be stimulated by revising tax policies to remove deterrents to expanding activity. Specifically, provision should be made for accelerated depreciation, deferred maintenance, postwar reserves for reconversion construction and planning, and liberalization of the provisions for averaging net operating losses over a period of years.

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Editor Monthly Bulletin

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The question of public housing versus private housing waxes warm in Illinois, particularly in Chicago and in Springfield before the General Assembly. Public Housing, as we know, is carried on with grants of federal funds, the housing when completed paying no real estate taxes, only a service charge to the community in which it is planted. Private housing, that is housing carried on by individuals or private corporations, pays regular real estate taxes to the county and city. The elimination of blighted areas and slums is of equal importance with the creation and development of sanitary living quarters for families of very small income. Private ownership of real estate must assume the payment of the difference in the city and county budget between public housing service charge and what that property would ordinarily be assessed for.

Philip M. Klutznick, Commissioner of the Federal Public Housing Authority says the Authority completed 105,000 family dwellings before the war and 25,000 additional under pre-war contracts, suspended for the time being. The 62,500 built for war needs will revert to low rent housing after the war.

Chicago Housing Authority proposes construction of 40,000 low rent dwellings, one half to be completed within three years. Public housing is expected to assist materially by eliminating large segments of blight in providing adequate homes for the low income group. To the question of public housing not paying real estate taxes, the Authority answers "payments which the Chicago Housing Authority proposes to make to municipal governments for the year 1944 in lieu of taxes will amount to \$33,571 more than the county collected in taxes on the sites of the public housing projects before they were built. The total of payments to be made to various taxing bodies for four low-rent, and four of the Authority's war-housing projects, will amount to \$145,300 for the year 1944 . . . Public housing has been exempted

from normal real estate taxation to make up the local governments' share of subsidy as required by the U. S. Housing Act of 1937."

On April 26, Metropolitan Housing Council held its annual meeting where five important committees read their reports. The Council favors public housing.

On April 27 Alderman Lindell, Chairman of Chicago's City Council Housing Committee held an open forum in the Common Council Chamber, City Hall, on the same subject. Among the many speakers, the majority favored private housing, in order to eliminate the extra tax burden on the tax paying property owner through public housing. Past Congressman dePriest replied to this that he too rented apartments, largely in the negro section on the south side. He appreciated the extra burden placed on the taxpayer but maintained that the human equation took precedence over economics. Alderman Lindell, in opening the meeting had stated that conditions were particularly bad on the south side where negroes dwelt and that city officials had, in the performance of their duties, planned to have blighted and unsanitary structures wrecked, but that owing to the great shortage of living quarters and the appeals of people living in sub-standard dwellings, many in unsanitary basements and some in chicken houses, the authorities had deferred destruction.

Some \$10,000,000 of the State's surplus has been earmarked by Governor Green and Mayor Kelly of Chicago for slum clearance and public housing, distributed among the State's municipalities. There is nothing in the State law requiring exemption for such improvements from regular real estate taxes. It is argued that should this money be so used, the State's public housing should pay taxes as private property is required to do. It is a much discussed question and J. Soule Warterfield, past president of the Chicago Real Estate Board and Morgan L. Fitch, chairman of that Board's legislative committee, have thrown themselves into this public discussion. Mr. Warterfield maintains that a half dozen or more private projects were stopped by the threat of tax exempt public housing, that federal public housing has an immunity from building codes, a lower cost market and has cleared only 148 acres of slum in Chicago. At this rate it would take 100 years to clear the slums in the city. Mr. Fitch calls tax exemption an opiate, that its effect is to make more slums by increasing the burden on property that continues to pay taxes. Fitch also objected to the Green-Kelly program, because "the little John Doe taxpayer has no representation."

Finally comes the Civic Federation of Chicago. They say the Chicago taxpayer is squeezed in between a 50% loss in assessed valuation and a 53% increase in tax rates; that using Chicago Housing Authority records, the average cost of the 7,515 units in the city's ten public projects was \$5,897.52 per unit. The assessed valuation of taxable property in Chicago is \$3.97 per \$100, the second highest in the nation. Only Boston is higher where the rate is \$3.99.

On another page of this issue of the Bulletin are presented two articles from the daily press of Chicago on this subject.

Seven Hundred Twenty—Count 'Em—Go to Hear Frank Lloyd Wright

"D day" came to the Casino Club on March 30 when 720 architects and others of the curious public invaded its colonnaded ballroom to hear themselves admonished by Frank Lloyd Wright—architect, philosopher, and citizen of the world. At least 148 of those attending were in a tractable mood after a fine dinner at the Casino preceding the lecture. The Chicago Chapter of the A.I.A. sponsored this "informal discussion" which was entitled "Past Failures—Future Hopes."

Mr. Wright responded to Alfred Shaw's introduction by proclaiming his love for Chicago, his Alma Mater, the only city he knew that had discovered its own waterfront, a city that builds to stay and that builds with brick when the rest of the country is building with cheap materials. "When Chicago makes a mistake," said Mr. Wright, "she makes a big one in a big way. That's Chicago and that's me, too."

These few kind words were followed by the scolding which sounded familiar to those who had heard Mr. Wright before. It covers our so-called worship of eclecticism, the lack of an indigenous American culture, the absence of an organic architecture.

Well, here is the gist of Mr. Wright's remarks:

What architecture ought to mean to you it doesn't, or you would not be sitting where you are or living where you are. It is time that we did a little thinking. We have run out of ideas, or we wouldn't be at war. We have never had an organic architecture, as such. The Japanese came close to it in their houses, the Gothic cathedrals had some of it, as did the Mayans. But we have never been able to get together on anything that is our own. We have only the old classic example of taking something from the outside and putting it on. Organic architecture comes from the "inside out," and the old period of "outside in" is gone. A Chinese philosopher stated it clearly when he said the reality of a building does not exist in the walls but in the space within them.

Democracy has never built anything. The thing that I am talking about is a stranger to all of you. Get inside and then proceed outward. Understand the character and purpose of what you do and follow through from generalities to particulars. Our education has never allowed us to begin at the beginning of anything. We will never have a culture of our own unless we take it from the beginning and build it ourselves. We are not the great nation we think we are. We are high in production and we can drench the whole world in material, but where are we going? We don't know how to do anything except manufacture.

Organic architecture will save man from disaster. We must make the machine go to work for man. The machine must go to the house. The house is not going to the machine if some of us can help it.

Look at architecture for what it meant to the people at the time it was done. Study the past in the light of the past. To be a good American today is to be an eclectic. Eclecticism is our religion. Now we have to stop and think and go on our own way.

Organic architecture wants to see things as they are. It wants to see a brick as a brick, a board as a board, glass as glass. Democracy has gotten off the track because it never discovered the truth which Jesus spoke, "The truth is within you." All that you will ever know or be is within you. Form follows function is only the beginning. We want our architecture to be in the nature of the material of which it is made; in the character of the people who make it. It should be more directly human than anything that ever happened before.

Architecture is the structure of whatever is; whatever is built or made. It was the nature of architecture that interested Beethoven; the nature of structure that interests any man. Science has walked over us and left us high and dry and sterile. This thing has to do with creation.

It is time to wake up the American people because our

civilization is hanging by a thread. I am talking to you about that thread. We haven't built anything and if we don't look out we won't be anything.

At this point the audience was invited to ask questions. Someone asked what about the city of the future in America? "The city is just as dated as static in radio," replied Mr. Wright. "The city has lived its life and done its work. When we wake up to the fact that architecture is indispensable to life, we shall not be content with this prostitution. We have the ways and means if we only had the ideas. Perhaps a polyglot nation had to run out of ideas before it could have any. Mass production has to get some ideas from the people. As long as mass production tells the people what they are to have, we are going to be in a bad way."

Were his remarks about mass production a stab at the pre-fabricated house? Mr. W.: "The machine must go to the man who is going to live in the house to find out what he wants and how he can best have it. It is cheaper to bring the tools into the field to work than to have the machine make a house like a street car. Is there anything more terrible than what the government calls housing? Slums were once a matter of poverty. Now they are a matter of poverty of the soul."

To the question "Shall we forget the work of Sir Christopher Wren and Bertram Goodhue?" Mr. Wright replied "Absolutely." Goodhue was a fine spirit but he got the idea of a break with the picture books too late in his life."

The last question was "Why don't we build some round houses?" The answer: "What difference does the shape make provided it fits the shape of the ground on which it stands. Every colonial house hates the ground—and the ground hates the house."

Alfred Shaw closed the forum with the story of a young student of architecture who asked his professor what he should do to become a great architect. The professor replied "Get next to God and get next to Frank Lloyd Wright." Asked what he thought of that Mr. Wright said it was a good answer except that it was "wrong end to."—Dorothy G. Wend

Joint Meeting of the Producers' Council, Chicago Chapter A.I.A. & Illinois Society of Architects

It was on the evening of April 10 when the representatives of the three organizations given in the title herewith, met in the Merchants and Manufacturers Club, Merchandise Mart, Chicago. The dinner, partaken of by 200 men began soon after 6:30 o'clock, but before this the Chicago Chapter, A.I.A. and the Illinois Society each held their separate monthly business meetings, in adjoining rooms shortly after 5:30 P.M.

The Chapter Meeting: There were no minutes of the previous meeting read, President Shaw announcing that this was a pre-convention meeting, preceding the Atlantic City A.I.A. restricted delegates convention, to be held April 24-25. President Shaw will be the one delegate from Chicago with Vice President Paul Gerhardt, Jr. as first alternate and past president Gerald Loeb as second alternate. Mr. Shaw, referring to the A.I.A. Bulletin of February, 1945, named the proposed candidates for President, Secretary and Treasurer to be elected by the Institute at the convention, and referred to Professor Provine of Illinois and Leigh Hunt of Wisconsin as regional directors and the work cut out for them. He explained what was proposed for unification, that under the Institute's authority State Societies whose function would be restricted to purely state matters for each respective state, will be organized even though many of the states now have state architects' societies. This produced considerable discussion from the floor, the participants wondering whether the existing societies would become such Institute state societies or whether there would, in some cases, be two state architects' societies in one state. It will be interesting to learn what the Atlantic City convention will produce on this question—harmony or discord. Not much else was taken up at the meeting. It soon adjourned for dinner.

Illinois Society: This body, too, held a short business meeting before the dinner, largely to keep the record clear that a regular monthly meeting had been held in April. No minutes were read, no correspondence presented, and the meeting soon adjourned to partake of the dinner which was ready to be served.

The dinner was good. It was a steak dinner, by the way, much appreciated. It was hot in the room and the noise and echoes were trying on the ear. After the meal the tables were moved out, men moved closer to the speaker's table and gave attention to the program.

Walter S. Steenbock, President, Chicago Chapter of the Producers' Council welcomed all gracefully and introduced Russell Jamieson, Assistant Manager to the Manager of the National Producers' Council, Inc. It was Mr. Jamieson's function to introduce the speaker of the evening, A. Gordon Lorimer, which he did well and completely, referring to his Scotch birth and his architectural education and experiences in important architects' offices in this country. Mr. Lorimer, A.I.A., is chief of the Bureau of Architecture, Department of Public Works, New York City and chairman of the Architectural Study Committee for the American Standards Association. Mr. Lorimer's subject was Modular Coordination, a subject architects have heard much of and thought about during the war years. This coordination has to do with standardization of all building materials to a fixed module with the thought of saving both labor and material by eliminating needless cutting by the mechanic on the job. This necessitates of course the figuring of architects' plans on the basis of a modular unit, thus saving money in the total cost of finished structures. Mr. Lorimer illustrated his points by elevational and sectional drawings devoted largely to masonry, glass blocks and steel windows, though wood window frames and sash were also illustrated. He used the screen and through photographs of industrial buildings, one in particular of these impressed your reporter as an exemplar of what this system of design would produce when consistently carried out from beginning to end. This picture was the exterior of a Sperry Gyroscope Company building in New Jersey. The columns throughout the building are 20 ft. centers in both directions, the exterior ones kept back of the glass in the perhaps 100 ft. long strip windows with window mullions centering on the column lines and intermediate mullions coming on modular divisions 4 ft. centers. It was all very practical and showed sound engineering.

The speaker referred to the module used by the ancient Greeks in their temples as a precedent for this system, but he did not carry this thought to the extent that the ancient module was divided into parts, as an inch is divided into sixteenths and sixteenths of an inch and that the details of Greek architecture resorted to these smaller parts quite freely. In this respect the new modular system proposed does not agree. The module is 4 inches and while this is sometimes split in half at window recesses back of the frames, sticking to the 4 inch module without splitting is the recommended practice.

It is all very interesting and quite in line with American mass production, a practice that has made American manufacturing great and unlimited as demonstrated by the extraordinary results produced during the present war. No other nation could have supplied the armies of all the allied countries with the necessary materials that America has furnished without mass production. It is engineering, pure and simple. Whether the system will ever produce the subtlety required for great architecture is a question that the future only can answer.

Mr. Lorimer was followed by E. W. Dienhart, chairman of the sub-committee on concrete products of the American Standards Association and assistant manager of Concrete Products Bureau. Mr. Dienhart had, a year or more ago, appeared as a speaker before an Illinois Society of Architects meeting on the same subject of modular coordination. He was followed by another gentleman who spoke on the application of the system to manufactured woodwork such as frames, sash, doors, etc.

Chicago Chapter, A. I. A. May Meeting

Called to assemble for dinner at 6:30 in the Tavern Club on the 16th, followed by an 8 o'clock business meeting, some forty odd members put in an appearance. President Alfred Shaw presided. There were no minutes read, though passing reference was made to the Frank Wright meeting of March 30. Albert C. Martin of Los Angeles (So. Calif. Chapter) was introduced as guest. The chairman referred in fitting terms to the passing of John A. Holabird, a prominent member. He then gave a sketchy outline of what happened at the streamlined A.I.A. convention at Atlantic City, April 24-25. Elsewhere in this issue a report of the Atlantic City convention is printed in synopsis.

The program speaker of the evening was Samuel A. Marx, chapter member, whose subject was proper architectural fees, with particular emphasis on fees that should be charged by architects who had arrived. The company was told that we stand on the threshold of a tremendous building boom; that each architect is offered, or will be offered, more business than he can possibly handle; that the time is ripe for establishing an "equitable system of charges." Marx held that architects are not properly appreciated and their economic position is menial compared to the doctor or lawyer who has arrived and has made a reputation. The architect with a large practice carries an expense and an overhead out of all proportion to that assumed by the doctor or lawyer, the latter two professional men specialize when they achieve greatly and the speaker recommended that the architect of reputation do likewise and not attempt to carry on a general practice. He maintained that the architect is always on the defensive and recommended that the man of reputation charge a flat fee, plus expenses as his remuneration. He would not have this fee standardized but would allow the individual to make it as high as he felt justified toward his client. Marx referred to the practice of so-called "designers", showing that they operated on this basis, employing expert advisors such as architects, engineers and other specialists; that their remuneration was generally far better than that of the architect in independent practice.

Questions and answers followed. There were many questions from the floor. The speaker made clear that he had no criticism to make of the A.I.A. standard minimum fee for the younger men whose reputation was still to be established. Mr. Shaw instanced the U. S. Navy practice in employing architects; they, he said, favored contractual relations with architects on the plan proposed by Mr. Marx.

No resolutions or recommendations were passed; the chairman stated, however, that the Chapter proposed to draw up recommendations on fees which would sooner or later be forwarded to the Board of Directors of the A.I.A. for their consideration.

Illinois Society May Meeting

To the Builder's Club, Chicago, came 56 men to attend the May dinner and meeting of the Illinois Society of Architects. With the inner man taken care of, President G. Harold Smith turned to the business meeting. Secretary Harris read the minutes of the April joint meeting. There was no correspondence that the chairman thought worthy of bringing to the meeting's attention. He asked for reports of committees but none were submitted. The chairman turned to the nominations committees for offices for the year 1945-46.

Following the by-laws Mr. Smith nominated the regular ticket, F. M. Bernham, Edward A. Schiwe and Anton Ansel. The other ticket is a members' ticket, nominated from the floor. It is William Klein, Bertram Weber and Charles B. Roe.

The programmed speaker was Arthur A. Boase, manager of the structural bureau of the Portland Cement Association. He is a structural engineer whose earliest experiences were with steel skeleton construction but who, in recent years has devoted himself to the design and analysis of reinforced concrete structures. Mr. Boase in 1944 spent four months in three South American countries, Brazil, Argentina and Uruguay, studying the recent buildings of reinforced concrete. Though his announced subject was Methods of Reinforced Concrete Design and Construction, he devoted himself entire-

ly to what he found in South America and compared it with the efforts in the U.S.A. with slight references to European precedent.

He spoke in extenso of Rio Janeiro's new concrete structures, most of them planned for from twelve to twenty-four stories and one projected to fifty stories. The largest building of this type in area he found in Buenos Aires. Contrasting building methods in the three countries he visited with those of the U.S.A. showed that European development, particularly concrete development in Germany and France was much more influential than U. S. methods. This is attributable to the fact that materials, steel particularly, are expensive while labor is cheap. Common labor costs would be equivalent to thirty-five cents per hour in our country with slight increase for skilled mechanics. In our country the cost of material compared with labor will average about 50% each and often labor rises beyond its 50%. The result is that material is used cautiously and sparingly, while labor operates under old methods without benefit of our own advanced machinery, saving manual labor. Cost comparisons of the finished concrete product were per cubic yard. The speaker compared our building codes with theirs and all to the advantage of the codes in the southern countries. There the engineers assumed more freedom in design and then had to demonstrate to competent engineers in the building departments, through detailed calculations, that the designer was safe and on the right track. With the engineering official thus assured the permit was granted. Mr. Boase made clear that most of the engineers and architects were European trained.

Pictures on the screen of many of these structures came next. Some were sensational in their daring. They were confined to Rio Janeiro, Sao Paulo and Buenos Aires. Surprisingly heavy loads were placed on columns supported on stepped concrete foundations without reinforcement. Enclosing walls of 8 inch thick brick, hollow tile or hollow concrete blocks are general with stucco facing.

A.I.A. Convention, Atlantic City, April 24-25

Although limited by the O. D. T. ruling to 50 delegates and officers, the concurrent meetings of the Producers' Council, the Council of Registration Boards and the Collegiate Schools group, together with unofficial visitors, gave the Atlantic City meeting somewhat the flavor of a regular convention. Comments indicated that the reduction in delegates made for an entirely successful and expeditious transaction of business. It has been suggested that the system should be adopted even when transportation allows a large number of men to travel. This would involve appointing representatives to be present at the meetings and permit relaxation and visiting by the others.

The Chicago Chapter was represented, as delegate, by President Alfred P. Shaw, who took an active part in the proceedings and reported briefly at the May Chapter meeting on the following highlights.

The election of officers put the affairs of the Institute for the next year in the hands of these architects: President, James R. Edmunds, Jr., Baltimore; Vice-president, Samuel E. Lunden, Los Angeles; Secretary, Alexander C. Robinson III, Cleveland; Treasurer, Charles F. Cellarius, Cincinnati; State Association Director, Branson V. Gamber, Detroit. The only contest was for the vice-presidency, in which Mr. Lunden was elected over Mr. Von Storch of New York.

The unification program, as published in the February A.I.A. Bulletin and as organized by amendments, was duly approved by the Convention. The situation in Illinois will not need to be pressed to a conclusion immediately, but it is the opinion of Regional Director Provine, that there should soon be a general convention of Illinois architects, Chapter, Society and otherwise, called for the purpose of discussing steps toward unification.

The Convention considered the Public Works program for listing of architects and recommendations for particular work. The Chicago Chapter was not in agreement with the general program and on the floor proposed amendments which were approved. These amendments provide, first, that members of regional panels are not eliminated from participation in the Public Works Program and, second, that the general policy will not infer that members of the panels make recommendations with reference to particular Commissions. Procedure will not be put into effect in areas where the program has not been approved by the Chapter.

Favorable action was taken on amendments to the By-

Laws regarding suspension of members for default of Chapter dues and simplifying the election of Honorary Corresponding Members. Approval was also voted on a modification of the Principles of Professional Practice, providing that though a violator will be subject to discipline, action is mandatory.

Walter McCornack made a report on the proposed architectural foundation for establishing scholarships and coordinating work in the schools with the policy of the Institute. The Board will appoint a committee to formulate the policies and put them into effect as funds are available.

With reference to returning veterans, the Washington representative, Edmund Purves, has reported to the Board that the matter of release has been taken up with the War Manpower Commission. After explaining the shortage of men in our field, he was advised that architects, draftsmen, and others in the planning field would be fifth in priority for discharge. The first two priorities are agriculture and transportation.

Time did not permit much activity on the lighter side but our delegate reports a revolutionary proposal adopted by a small group as an improvement over small house developments, which are now built with identical plans, but with exteriors of different architectural styles, colonial, tudor, etc. This new proposal is unique in its simplicity and calls for single elevation for all structures, and permits any plan being placed back of the elevation. In its final form adopted by this group, the highest use of the material in the elevation was accomplished by constructing the elevation without windows or doors of any kind and permitting the users to merely walk around the elevation instead of through it. Since returning, later development has been added, namely to make the elevation into a screen, possibly translux. This would permit the owner to have not only a choice, but constant change. The whole aspect of a town could, in deference to season or distinguished guests, be changed at the turning of a switch.

Some two hundred fifty architects, engineers and builders' representatives were dinner guests of General Electric and H. H. Robertson Companies on May 8 in the Ball Room Stevens Hotel, Chicago. Papers illustrated by lantern slides were read on "Light Steel Construction" by J. J. Siddall; "Q-Floor Wiring" by L. F. Kummel; "Television" by G. Peterson. Models of Robertson steel floor construction and "Q-Floor Wiring" were on exhibition.

Ralph C. Harris, Chicago architect and I.S.A. secretary has moved his office from suite 1316, Builders Building to suite 1123-24 Monadnock Building, Chicago. Ph. Wabash 0273

New Illinois Professional Engineering Act

On March 21, 1945 there was introduced in the 64th General Assembly of Illinois at Springfield, House Bill No. 337. This is an act to regulate the practice of professional engineering and to repeal an act having the same purpose filed July 24, 1941. The latter was declared unconstitutional by the Illinois Supreme Court on September 19, 1944.

The new act exempts from the provisions of the Act:

The practice of structural engineering as defined in the "Illinois Structural Engineering Act."

The practice of architecture as defined in the "Illinois Architectural Act."

The execution of work as distinguished from the planning or design thereof and the supervision of the construction of such work as a foreman or superintendent.

The services performed by those ordinarily designated as chief engineer of plant operation, chief operating engineer, locomotive, stationary, marine, power plant or hoisting and portable engineers, or electrical maintenance or service engineers, or engineers employed in connection with street lighting, traffic control signals, police and fire alarm systems, water works, steam, electric and sewage treatment and disposal plants or the services ordinarily performed by an workman regularly employed as locomotive, stationary, marine, power plant or hoisting and portable engineer or electrical maintenance or service engineer for any corporations contractor or employer.

On Private and Public Housing

"Capable, energetic Ald. Arthur Lindell, chairman of the city council housing committee, has called together interested groups for a meeting on Friday next in an endeavor to find a realistic approach to slum clearance and other postwar housing problems.

"At many previous meetings, called for a similar purpose, the housing situation has been given an airing with disappointing results. Let us hope that the Friday meeting will be more successful.

"It is doubtful, however, if any meeting of this character will be productive of results until a complete and thorough analysis of the cost of Chicago's public housing, together with income of tenants, rentals charged and government subsidies, forthcoming from an independent audit.

"To date, factual information has been noticeable by its eagerness, and comparisons with private housing has, at times, been afflicted with sins of omission that resulted in much misconception, judging by speeches and newspaper articles by proponents of public housing.

"Speaking of housing, it is pertinent to quote from an article in the Toledo Legal News:

"While all this discussion of public vs. private housing going on, why try to find that indefinite line between where the public housers say they should operate and where private industry should operate? Why not cut clean and leave all housing to private industry, where it belongs, and where necessary, let government lend its aid to substandard income tenants directly, enabling them to pay at least the minimum amounts on which private industry can operate?

"Such a procedure would solve the problem of the substandard income groups and would avoid the danger of governmental intrusion in a field which has always belonged to private industry. This isn't solely the problem of the private building, real estate and mortgaging industries; it is the problem of all private industry, for, if a precedent of governmental intrusion is once established on a permanent basis, there is no assurance at all that it will stop at housing."

-A. Campbell MacIsaac, Real Estate Editor, in Chicago Herald-American

Taxes and Rents

Ald. Lindell the other day issued an interesting statement about housing in Chicago. The poorest people in the city, he said, those with incomes of \$1,200 a year or less, can't afford to pay more than \$6.85 a room per month and for them the solution must be subsidized housing. As incomes decrease, less and less subsidy is needed. The subsidies Mr. Lindell is thinking of are provided both by the local and the national governments, chiefly in the form of tax exemptions. The federal government makes it easy to borrow money at low interest for a public housing project by exempting from federal income tax the interest paid on the mortgage. The local governments' subsidy takes the form of waiving 90 or 95 percent of general taxes on public housing projects. These exemptions are reflected in lowered rents to those few who are fortunate enough to be accepted as tenants.

What all this means is that some people will pay not only their own rent but part of somebody else's rent as well; and many of those who will contribute to the subsidies will be no better off than those who benefit from them.

Mr. Lindell assumes that there is no way other than by subsidies to reduce the costs of housing for people of small and moderate means. Obviously that isn't so. Another way would be to reduce building costs and building operating costs. Very large savings could be affected if the building code merely specified standards of strength, sanitation, fire resistance, etc., and left it to the ingenuity of architects, builders, and building supply firms to meet the specifications. Costs would be very considerably lowered if certain materials were not required to be used and other materials, just as strong, safe, and as sanitary but cheaper, were not blacklisted.

The large item of labor cost in building could also be reduced. This need not be done, and in our opinion, should not be done by lowering the rates of pay so much as by persuading the unions to relax their restrictions on the individual workman's output. Everybody in the building business knows that bricklayers, for example, could accomplish far more in a day than they now do, without suffering from overstrain. It is said that if union rules permitted assembly of plumbing and heating units in the shop instead of on the job, other large savings could be effected. Quite probably this is true. At any rate, there is no sense in talking about subsidies as the only means of getting rents down as long as everything else which might be done to reduce costs has not been attempted.

It is hardly necessary to add that greater economy in government would reduce taxes and rents. It is easier to vote a subsidy, apparently, than to disturb vested interests in inefficiency.—*Chicago Tribune Editorial, April 30.*

Speaking of Furniture and Architecture Moderne

... "In a poll conducted to determine why men get up in the night, it was discovered that only 2.4 per cent had to get up; 1.6 per cent went prowling around the kitchen to find something to eat. The other 96 per cent, it seemed, got up to go home.

"In this same spirit of research into the private lives of the citizenry in their nocturnal moments, 47 per cent of the wives said they slept on their stomachs, which from the point of view of interior design tells us nothing of the kind of beds they prefer to sleep on their stomachs on....

"I believe that the so-called international architecture is completely alien to the American ideology. The theory, for instance, as expounded by Le Corbusier, that the house is a 'machine for living', can never be sympathetically received by Americans, however exciting the idea may seem to a small group of Neo-European intellectuals. Nor do I think the approach to architecture and furniture as expounded by the elite of the German Bauhaus can be other than completely alien to a democratic country. The mystical doctrines of Expressionism, Abstractionism, Surrealism, and Dadaism, with which the thinking of the Bauhaus elite is so heavily permeated, to say nothing of the Marxian ideology that is mixed up with it, are also alien to the American ideal.

"This type of thinking, with its overtones of Nietzschean Superman mythology, is a far cry from the simple, healthy, turning-to-nature-for-inspiration that is the basis for contemporary American architecture and furniture."—T. H. Robsjohn-Gibbings in the April *Journal of The A.I.A.*

The problems of Europe and of the rest of the world are not the same as ours. They face the task of rebuilding a war-shattered economy, of settling a large number of people. Above all they are, to a much larger extent than we, dependent on foreign trade. If the United States solves the problem of avoiding periods of depression accompanied by large unemployment and if the standard of living of this country continues to rise at a faster rate than in those countries where the means of production are largely government-owned or controlled, foreign nations will again realize the blessings of private enterprise and will try to emulate our system.—*Markus Nadler in Nation's Business.*

"In the past, architectural forms were conceived to control daytime illumination. Architecture was essentially 'diurnal,' and not created to be floodlighted from below. Floodlighting of classic architecture seems a very unbecoming gesture, to say the least, if we respect classic architecture as a distinguished ancestral lady. Today, architecture has a night life and we have already achieved elements of 'nocturnal' architecture, but examples of a 24-hour architecture, architecture designed for day and night illumination, were amazingly rare even on that vast experimental ground, the New York World's Fair of 1939."—*Professor Jean Labatut of Princeton University.*

For A "Better Chicago Plan"

A series of twelve cash prizes totalling \$25,000, is announced by the Chicago Herald-American, for individuals or groups who produce the "Better Chicago Plan"—covering every phase of municipal activity from slum clearance and transportation to the best form of political government for the Chicago metropolitan area.

Contestants have until midnight, Monday, July 16th to submit their plans together with necessary illustrations, diagrams, etc. A board of judges will pass upon the detailed presentations. The first main prize is \$10,000; the second main prize is \$5,000; the third main prize \$2,000. There are nine additional prizes of \$1,000 and \$500 in the various divisions of the contest. Plans are limited to a maximum of 10,000 words.

The judges: Daniel Burnham Jr., president of the Chicago Regional Planning Association; Arthur Cutts Willard, president, University of Illinois; Prof. Ovid Wallace Eshbach, dean of engineering, Northwestern University; Dr. Jesse E. Hobson, director, Illinois Institute of Technology; Most Rev. Bernard J. Sheil, D.D., Auxiliary Bishop, Catholic Archdiocese of Chicago; Walter Blucher, Municipal Finance Officers Association; Walter F. Dodd, attorney; L. Moholy-Nagy, president, Institute of Design; John W. Root of the American Institute of Architects; Harold S. Buttenheim, editor "The American City"; and James C. Downs, Jr.; chairman, Mayors Committee on Race Relations. Jerrold Loeb, chairman of the National Public Housing Conference of Chicago will act as professional advisor to the contest. Questions should be submitted, in writing, to the Professional Adviser, Jerrold Loeb, care Chicago Herald-American, 326 W. Madison St., Chicago 6, Ill.

The three main prizes are for the plans which offer the best solution for an overall plan for the metropolitan area, "integrating the relationship of the industrial, commercial, transportation, educational, administrative and recreational area of the region." The main prize contestants will be required to write,—in addition to the main thesis—a 500-word synopsis of their ideas.

The secondary prizes (\$1,000 and \$500 award) are as follows: Neighborhood Community Problem; Political and Administration Problem; Industrial Area Development; Retail Trade & Office Building Area; Railroad Transportation Problem; Highway Problem; Administrative & Cultural Center. The individual plans thesis will not exceed 3,000 words in length.

The contest has been approved by the Committee on Competitions of the American Institute of Architects.

"We should have a drastic overhauling of our public finance to insure a continuation of this relatively independent financial position which the states and communities have achieved during this war period. A man can't be independent with a tin cup in his hand. States and communities can not carry on their proper responsibilities in our constitutional system if they look to the federal government to finance their activities. In the field of government this proposed revision of financial structure is as important as the tax changes needed in the field of economics to encourage risk taking and job creating activities."—Eric A. Johnston, Pres. U. S. Chamber of Commerce

Tennessee Architects Registration Law: Each Chapter subdivision should make every effort to police its own area. Evidence of violations may be turned over to the local Prosecuting Attorney for further handling. The Registration Board is not equipped to enforce the law.

John Augur Holabird, noted Chicago architect, died on his 59th birthday in St. Luke's Hospital, Chicago. Mr. Holabird was born in Evanston, Illinois, entered U. S. Military Academy, West Point 1903, graduating 1907. He attended the Military Engineers School at Washington Barracks in 1909,

and Ecole des Beaux Arts, Paris, 1913. He began practice architecture in 1913 and became a member of the firm Holabird and Roche, architects, in 1919. After the death of Martin Roche in 1927, the firm name was changed to Holabird and Root in 1928. Mr. Root is the son of the late John Wellborn Root of the old firm of Burnham and Root. Under the firm name of Holabird and Roche during John Holabird's time were designed, among others, Grant Park Soldier's Field, Palmer House, Stevens Hotel, all in Chicago. In the Century of Progress, 1933, Holabird and Root were architects of the Chrysler Building. Other great structures designed by Holabird and Root are: Daily News and Board of Trade Buildings, Palmolive and 333 N. Michigan Avenue, Chicago; Ramsey County Court House, St. Paul, Minnesota; Lafayette Building, Statler Hotel, Washington, D.C.; Michigan Square Building with Diana Court, Chicago, and many others. John Holabird was one of the architects of Jane Addams Public Housing Project in Chicago.

Commissioned a 2nd Lieutenant upon his graduation from West Point, he became a Captain in the Illinois National Guard from 1914 to 1917. From August 1918 to March 1919 he was a Major and then Lieut. Colonel in the Field Artillery in the first world war and won the distinguished service medal and the Croix de Guerre.

Mr. Holabird was a trustee of the Chicago Art Institute and the Newberry and Crerar Libraries and the Morton Arboretum. Recently he was appointed by Mayor Kelly member of the Chicago Plan Commission.

Mr. Holabird joined the American Institute of Architects in 1921 and in 1934 he was advanced to F.A.I.A. He joined the Illinois Society of Architects in 1926, served as one of its directors for two years and was a member of the Society at his death.

N. Max Dunning, Chicago architect until entering Federal service at Washington in 1933, died there April 19, age 72. Mr. Dunning was born in Kenosha, Wisconsin, was a student at the University of Wisconsin, 1891-94 when he came to Chicago. There he entered the architect office of J. C. Llewellyn where he remained for some years, gaining experience in school buildings and industrial plants. He won the firm travelling scholarship of the Chicago Architectural Sketch Club in 1900 and travelled abroad.

Returning, he became a member of Board of Park and Building Advisors of Illinois under Gov. Lowden; later member of the U. S. Housing Corporation during world war one, member President Hoover's Emergency Commission on Unemployment; advisor R.F.C. 1933; assistant director of housing, P.W.A. 1934; assistant, Procurement Division, Treasury Department 1935; assistant to Commissioner of Building Administration, F.W.A. 1939.

During his earlier career may be mentioned, an organizer of the Architectural League of America about 1900 and president of that organization 1904; past president of the Illinois Chapter A.I.A. and Fellow of the A.I.A.; for three years director of the A.I.A. and in 1924 became first vice president. Mr. Dunning became a member of the Illinois Society of Architects in October, 1914, serving actively on many committees and remained a member until death.

The work of his private practice in Chicago included the Furniture Mart where he, in association with Henry Raede and George Nimmons were the architects.

At the time of his death he was architectural advisor to W. E. Reynolds, Public Buildings Administrator.

Godfrey Eric Larson, Chicago architect died there March 27, age 47. Mr. Larson was born in Chicago, educated in its public schools and graduated from Armour Institute of Technology in Architecture. He served as draftsman in Chicago architects' offices, after which he practiced independently, designing and seeing to the erection of apartment houses and churches. He became the official architect for the Swedish Mission Covenant Denomination. From 1930 to 1935 he functioned as field representative for P.W.A., specializing in public schools and institutional buildings. At the time of his passing he had before him for postwar construction, public school buildings in Cook County, outside of Chicago.

He became a member of the Illinois Society of Architects in November 1935 and remained an active participant to the end.